

Initially, Applicants are submitting concurrently herewith a Request for Suspension of Action for one month in order to schedule a personal interview.

All of the claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Mitsutake '538 in view of Kato '708, Dynka '825, Banno (JP '731) and Roovers '785. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, and includes the steps of fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube, evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube while simultaneously baking the entire airtight vessel, and activating a getter disposed in the airtight vessel. After initiating the evacuation step, in a condition where the getter is activated, the evacuation step is continued and the evacuation tube is sealed by heating the evacuation tube.

Claim 13 relates to a method for manufacturing an image forming apparatus using an airtight vessel containing a plurality of electron emitting devices and image forming members. Claim 13 includes the same steps as in Claim 1.

Claim 25 of Applicants' invention relates to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, and includes the steps of fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube, evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube, and activating a non-evaporable getter disposed in the airtight vessel before baking the airtight vessel. Additional steps include baking the airtight vessel and sealing the evacuation tube, and after baking the entire airtight vessel, reactivating the non-evaporable getter.

Claim 26 relates to a method for manufacturing an airtight vessel, and includes the steps of fabricating an airtight vessel connected to an evacuation tube, evacuating the inside

of the airtight vessel through the evacuation tube, and baking the entire airtight vessel.

Additionally, an evaporable getter is degassed during the baking step and a non-evaporable getter is activated after the gassing step and during the baking step. Additionally, the evacuation tube is sealed during the baking step, and after the baking step, the evaporable getter is activated.

As discussed in the previous Amendment of March 24, 2003, the primary citation to Mitsutake relates to an electron beam apparatus and an image forming apparatus that includes an airtight envelope. An exhaust pipe of the envelope is connected to a vacuum pump and used to evacuate the envelope. The Office Action acknowledges that Mitsutake differs from Applicants' invention in that it 1) does not require gettering prior to sealing; 2) does not explicitly disclosed simultaneously baking the entire airtight vessel while evacuating; and 3) is unclear on whether the exhaust tube is sealed by heating and whether or not evacuation is continued during the sealing of the exhaust tube.

In the Office Action, in footnote 1 and in the Response to Argument section (page 6), it is addressed why it would have been obvious to modify Mitsutake in view of Kato and Dynka. It is respectfully submitted, however, that even assuming, arguendo, Mitsutake could have been combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action, the proposed combination still fails to teach or suggest, inter alia, evacuating the inside of the airtight vessel through an evacuation tube while simultaneously baking the entire vessel and, after initiating the evacuation step and in a condition where the getter is activated, continue the evacuation step and seal the evacuation tube by heating the evacuation tube.

Roovers provides a method of sealing a vacuum vessel having a thick wall exhaust tube and discloses that it is routine to heat the exhaust tube to seal it and continue baking and pumping until the exhaust tube has been sealed. Roovers does not teach or suggest, however, activating a getter or evacuating and sealing in consideration of an activated getter.

Finally, Banno relates to an image display manufacturing method that discloses a second process of sealing an exhaust tube that is performed after vacuum exhaustion by a first process.

The tertiary citations to Roovers and Banno fail to compensate for the deficiencies in the proposed combination of art discussed above with respect to Applicants' Claims 1 and 16.

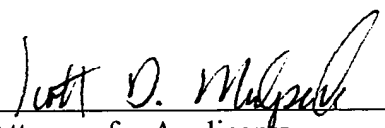
The cited art also fails to teach or suggest, inter alia, reactivating a non-evaporable getter after baking the entire airtight vessel as in Claim 25 or using an evaporable getter and a non-evaporable getter as in Claim 26.

Accordingly, it is submitted that it would not have been obvious to modify Mitsutake in view of the secondary and tertiary citations in order to render obvious Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.
office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our
below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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